Compliments of

Knickerbocker
Trust Company

WHEN BANKS BEGAN

When Banks Began

A Few Facts
and
A Few Fancies

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DURST

Ye Olde Tyme Banking Place

We cannot show you the real "first bank." The above half-tone is of the Captain Kidd bank, a typical American banking institution of the year 1695.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.
FIRST BANK IN AMERICA

Early Banks

The very earliest bank of which reliable record is found was the Bank of Venice, founded 1171. A.D. Other early banks were the Bank of Barcelona (1401), the first to negotiate foreign bills of exchange; the Bank of Genoa (1407), the first to issue circulating notes; the famous Bank of Amsterdam (1607). Bank of Hamburg (1619), Bank of Rotterdam (1635), and the Bank of Stockholm (1680).

New York's First Bank

In 1800 there were two banks doing business in New York City; the Bank of New York, founded 1784, and the Bank of the Manhattan Company, founded 1799.

The former was originally located at No. 156 Queen Street (now Pearl Street), in the old Walton Mansion, and in 1787 was moved to No. 11 Hanover Square, to a house purchased from the heirs of Nathaniel Hazard. Here the Bank remained for ten years, being then removed to the northeast corner of Wall and William Streets (where it still stands).

The bank was kept open "every day except Sundays, Christmas, New Year's, Good Friday, Fourth of July, and special holidays appointed by law." The hours of business were from ten to one in the forenoon and from three to five in the afternoon.

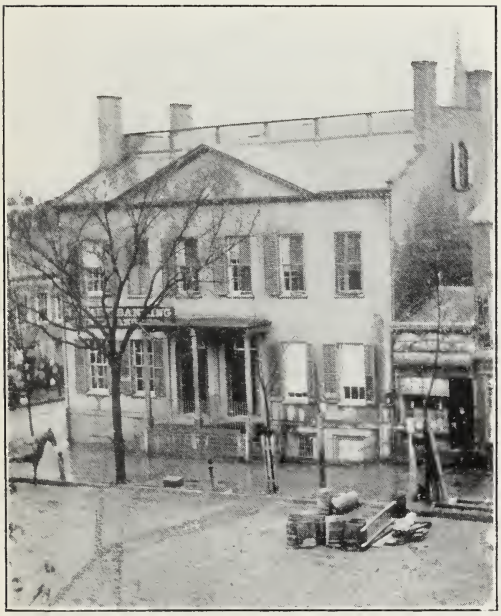
Discounts were made twice a week and not for longer than 30 days.

In 1789 the State Senate was petitioned to incorporate the bank, that the liability of individual ownership might not continue to prevent its growth. The charter was granted in 1791.

The money used at that time was in pounds, shillings and pence, in New York Currency, the dollar, which was worth eight shillings, being merely money of account by which the other was measured.

THE WALTON HOUSE, IN WHICH THE BANK OF NEW YORK COMMENCED BUSINESS JUNE 9, 1784

THE BANK OF NEW YORK, 1797



NATIONAL NEWARK BANKING CO.
NEWARK, N. J.
1804

MASSACHUSETTS NATIONAL BANK
BOSTON, MASS.
1784

Money

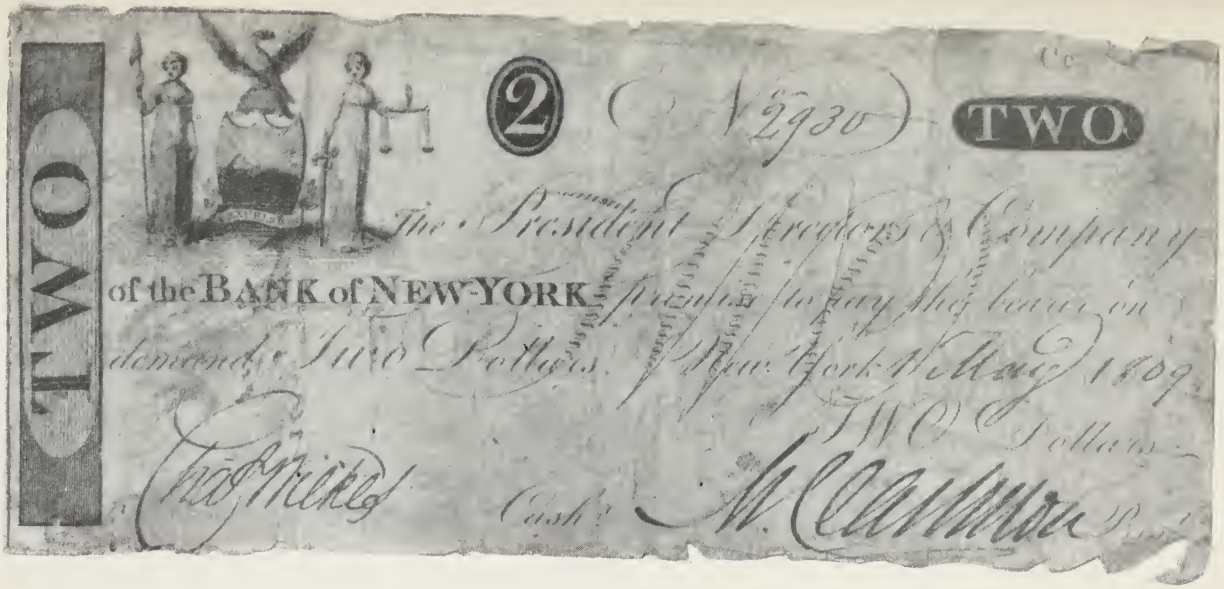
A modern paraphrase of Pope's oft-quoted line would seem appropriately to be, "The proper study of mankind is money." Proper or improper, it must be admitted that money is the specialty to receive the most attention.

Doubtless it has been so since mankind first discovered that the acquisition of wealth is desirable.

The American Indians were quite as industrious in planning to add to their wampum store as were the early colonists in hoarding the few rare bits of specie that came their way.

The ingenious devices of our forefathers, who not only clipped every coin that passed through their hands, but even cut silver dollars into halves and quarters called "sharp shins" (in Richmond in 1790), culminated in the gigantic coin-clipping bee held by Uncle Sam upon the arrival of the nice fresh coins of the big French loan. That mankind has to advantage studied money and money-making is sufficiently evidenced by the commonness of large fortunes nowadays.

Money is the all-absorbing study. Some seek ways to acquire it, some to spend it, but then it is always money.



BANK NOTE, 1809

The First Check

The first checks on record were the inscriptions of credit by means of which depositors in that first European bank, the Bank of Venice, transferred their funds.

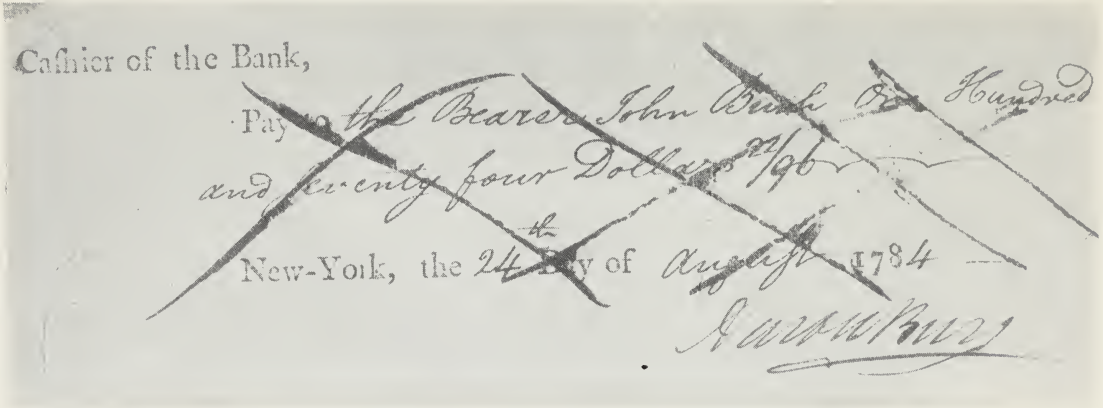
Money deposited in that bank could not be withdrawn, but could be transferred at will. Almost any one could run a bank on such a basis.

The checks were certified, passed as currency, and were at a premium because of the mutilated condition of the specie of that time.

The Bank of Genoa circulating notes were used much as checks, being negotiable only by endorsement. Checks have followed the form of money all the way down through the centuries, and a complete collection of the check forms of a country would be a financial history of that country. Early days (1785) in Tennessee—or Franklin, as that territory was at first called—might be indicated by orders to "pay to John Doe or bearer one gal. peach brandy and one raccoon skin," which same were actually *legal tender* for 3 shillings and 9 pence."

The State officers, from governor down to hangman, were ordered paid in such currency at that time.

In 1722 farm produce was legal tender in North Carolina. Think of a check for 100 beets! Farm produce, though, was less likely to be counterfeited than pelts, in which deception was practiced often in such ways as by making otter skins by rolling up raccoon skins, leaving an otter tail hanging out. A pretty foxy lot were our great-great-grand-sires! We'll hope that their individual paper was better than that of their banks.


Cashier of the Bank,

Pay to the Bearer John Burk Six Hundred

and twenty four Dollars 21/96

New-York, the 24th Day of August 1784

Aaron Burr

CHECK, 1784
SIGNED BY AARON BURR

Modern Banks

How we do grow in this country! And our banks o'ertop all the rest of our tropic financial vegetation. It seems worth while to note here that in spite of the rapid growth of our banking institutions. their increase in soundness and solidity has been in direct ratio to their growth.

To write an appreciation of the modern bank would require a monograph of more pages than this entire booklet. As for *picturing* just those banks that we ourselves know. it would be quite impossible.

The following half-tones show a few of our up-to-date banks.

KNICKERBOCKER TRUST COMPANY
FIFTH AVENUE AND 34TH STREET, NEW YORK

CORN EXCHANGE BANK, NEW YORK

INTERIOR VIEW
LONG ISLAND LOAN & TRUST CO., BROOKLYN, N. Y.

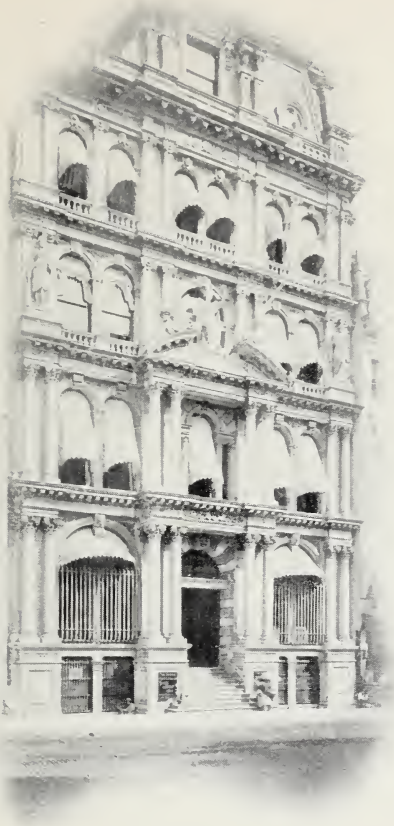
BANK OF NORTH AMERICA, PHILADELPHIA, PENN.

* * *

From those old-time banking institutions, with their rudimentary methods and forms, it is a far cry to the banks of to-day with their beautifully designed, embossed or engraved checks and letterheads.

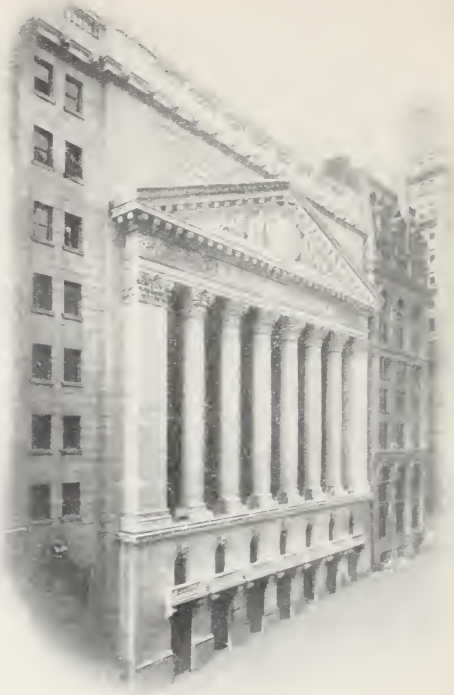
The making of bank stationery ought to be classed among the fine arts nowadays. It's worthy of a William Morris or a Roycroft shop.

It's an old-fashioned bank that doesn't use high-grade stationery, and in spite of our desire to be just to all persons in spite of externals, we must say that a man *can* be judged by his clothes and a bank by its stationery. Not a bank's reserve fund, perhaps, but its progressiveness and, if you'll accept the word, accommodativeness. No one can judge reserve funds by outside appearances. That old Amsterdam bank, with a reputation for unlimited resources and fifty millions of dollars in its vault, didn't have a cent. The revolutionary soldiers broke in, in 1794, and found that to be the case—much to their regret, for there was no money in robbing an empty bank.



NATIONAL PARK BANK
NEW YORK

LAST DAY IN THE OLD STOCK EXCHANGE



NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE

NEW YORK CLEARING HOUSE AND CHASE NATIONAL BANK

NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE, NEW YORK

LIBERTY NATIONAL BANK
NEW YORK

Shin-Plasters

From POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC.

Light purse, heavy heart.
Great talkers, little doers.
In success be moderate.
A good lawyer, a bad neighbor.
He that drinks fast pays slow.
If you have time, don't wait for time.
Keep your mouth wet, your feet dry.
Diligence is the mother of good luck.
The family of fools is ancient.
Creditors have better memories than debtors.
Don't think to hunt two hares with one dog.
Be neither silly, nor cunning, nor wise.
Keep thy shop and thy shop will keep thee.
Nothing but money is sweeter than honey.
Hope and a red rag are baits for men and mackerel.
The good paymaster is lord of another man's purse.

Let thy maid-servant be faithful, strong and homely.

Take counsel in wine, but resolve afterwards in water.

By diligence and patience the mouse bit in two the cable.

Wealth is not his that has it, but his that enjoys it.

There are many witty men whose brains cannot fill their bellies.

He that sells upon trust loses many friends and always wants money.

Creditors are a superstitious set, great observers of set days and times.

God works wonders now and then :

Behold! a lawyer, an honest man.

If you know how to spend less than you get, you have the Philosopher's stone.

The proof of gold is fire ; the proof of woman, gold: the proof of man, a woman.

There are three faithful friends : an old wife, an old dog, and ready money.

HANOVER NATIONAL BANK, NEW YORK

NEW YORK CLEARING HOUSE

NATIONAL CITY BANK, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

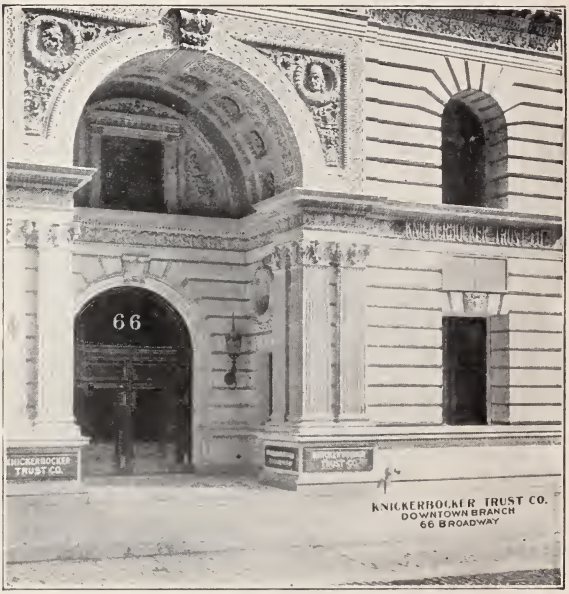
CAPITAL, $1,000,000

Knickerbocker Trust Company,

234 Fifth Avenue, cor. 27th Street.
Branch Offices, 66 Broadway, and
100 West 125th St., New York.

OFFICERS:

CHAS. T. BARNEY, President.
FRED'K L. ELDRIDGE, 1st Vice-President.
JOSEPH T. BROWN, 2d Vice-President.
WM. B. RANDALL, Trust Officer.
FRED'K GORE KING, Secretary and Treas.
JULIAN M. GERARD, Ass't Sec. and Ass't Treas.
B. L. ALLEN, Manager Harlem Branch



Legal Depository for State, City and Court Funds.

INTEREST allowed on Time Deposits. Deposits also received subject to Demand Checks, which pass through the Clearing House as do those upon any city bank.

Authorized to act as Executor or Administrator of Estates, and as Guardian, Receiver, Registrar, Transfer and Financial Agent for States, Cities, Towns, Railroads, and other corporations, and to accept any other Trusts in conformity with the laws of any State or of the United States. Letters of Credit furnished.

Business and Personal Accounts Solicited.

AVERY CLASSICS

HARLEM OFFICES
125TH ST and LENOX AVE